1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

the post. After crows have consumed the offerings, the family friend kicks the post awry. On the next morning he cuts it down with an axe. The first-grade mourners pull down the stoves they had erected to cook their food.

In the above ritual is seen the destruction of articles used in mourning ritual, and the purpose of such destruction is to ensure their 'confinement' to mourning. Things associated with bad-sacredness and pollution themselves become bad-sacred and polluted. Consequently, they have to be destroyed.

'Inversion' and 'confinement' underlie more funeral rites than 'identity'. But it is important to note that 'identity' also exists. For instance, the corpse, which is ritually impure, is made to lie on a pure bench in the central hall. Besides, its head is made to touch the south-western pillar.

XI

Almost every Coorg adult chews betel leaves and areca-nut, and addicts chew all day. Lime paste is spread over the rough side of the leaf and the leaf is put into the mouth along with small bits of areca-nut. Frequently bits of *catechu* and tobacco are chewed along with betel leaves and areca-nut.

At night, after dinner, the men chew betel leaves in the veranda, and the women in one of the inner rooms. A man or woman looks forward to this part of the day: there is no more work to be done and everyone is at leisure. Talk flows freely.

The chewing of betel leaves is also intimately associated with married life. The husband and wife frequently chew betel together. The wife applies the paste, folds the leaf, and gives it to her husband. Until recently, among the upper castes in south India, unmarried boys and girls were told to keep away from betel leaves and areca-nut. Indulgence in betel leaves was a symbol of the married state.

Guests are offered betel leaves and areca-nut both to chew and to carry home. Failure to offer betel leaves to a guest would almost amount to an insult.

Betel leaves and areca-nut are indispensable on any ritual occasion. They must accompany every ritual gift or payment, whether it is made to another person or spirit or deity.

The chewing of betel leaves represents full participation in

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social life as well as a happy state. Mourners who have been withdrawn from participation in social life have to abstain from betel leaves, and the ritual chewing of betel leaves is one of the symbols of the end of mourning.

On the twelfth day, at the burial-ground, mourners offer the dead man's spirit betel leaves and areca-nut along with meat and liquor. Each of them then takes a betel leaf and areca-nut out of the leaf-cup in which they are placed and chews them. When they come home the family friend hands to each of them a few betel leaves and areca-nut which they chew for a while, and then take the chewed stuff out of their mouths and throw it on to the roof of the mourning-house. This is one of the ritual acts symbolizing the end of mourning.

It is pertinent to recall here that the second-grade mourners are given betel leaves and areca-nut on the eleventh day alone after the performance of a particular rite called *mēnguva*. The first-grade mourners perform the latter rite on the day before *māda*, but they are *not* given betel leaves and areca-nut to chew at the end of it as the most rigorous part of mourning ends for them only on the *māda* day, after returning home from the burial-ground. It is appropriate then that they should not be given betel leaves and areca-nut till the *māda* day.

A relative who chewed betel leaves during mourning would be regarded as lacking in affection towards the dead person, if not actually gloating over his death. It is not very easy to hide the chewing of betel as the mouth and lips become very red after chewing.

It has already been mentioned that there is a great difference, if not opposition, between the ritual treatment of the mourners and the corpse. Things forbidden to the mourners are offered to the spirit of the dead person. For instance, while mourners have to abstain from meat, liquor, and betel and nut, the spirit of the dead man is offered these articles. The mourners have to show their sorrow by abstaining from dietary articles which have come to stand for happiness or wealth or participation in social life. While the mourner denies to himself things that he likes or values, he offers them to the dead man's spirit to show his affection and regard. While the mourner abstains from chewing betel leaves, a paste made by pounding betel leaves and areca-nut together is put into the corpse's mouth. Later, the dead person's spirit is offered betel leaves and areca-nut.

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If the ritual chewing of betel leaves takes place earlier than the *māda* day, the chewing only confers partial freedom on the mourners. The third- and second-grade mourners are completely freed from ritual mourning only after the *māda* day, while the first-grade mourners are freed only after performing the *dīkshé uttuva* ritual, several days, if not weeks, after the *māda*. The latter may chew betel leaves after *māda*, but they have to observe certain other mourning taboos till they perform the *dīkshé uttuva* ritual.

XII

The *dīkshé uttuva* ritual consists in the offer of *piṇḍa*, or balls of rice or rice-flour, to the spirit of the departed person. The offerings are made under the guidance of a Brahmin at a centre of pilgrimage.

The *dīkshé uttuva* ritual is frequently performed on the first of Libra, or on the Shivarātri day. The former occurs in October–November, the latter in February–March. On both these days, which are regarded as sacred, people go on pilgrimages to various places along the course of the river Kāvēri, and especially to the source of the river, Tala Kāvēri.

The first of Libra and Shivarātri are not, however, the only occasions for the performance of *dīkshé uttuva*. It may be performed on a new-moon day. Generally, first-grade mourners perform *dīkshé uttuva* after the lapse of what is considered to be a 'decent interval'.

Formerly, first-grade mourners sometimes observed ritual mourning for as long as six months before performing *dīkshé uttuva*. This very rarely happens nowadays. The present tendency is to cut short the mourning period, but even now anyone who performed *dīkshé uttuva* before a month had elapsed after the death would be regarded as either wanting in affection or extremely Westernized, or both.

The first-grade mourners go to Bhāgamaṇḍla, where the river Kanaké joins the Kāvēri. The men mourners have their heads and faces shaved completely, after which they bathe in the confluence. They then dress themselves in the mourning uniform of white shoulder-cloth and waist-cloth. Women mourners similarly bathe and put on ritual robes.

Each of the first-grade mourners then offers a ball of rice-flour mixed with plantain fruit, honey, and a small quantity of gingelly grains. The ingredients of this offering are sold near by, and they

462 brunt of the labour on the farm. The men plough the fields, transplant, and reap the rice. The women carry the manure, pluck weeds and clean [521] the paddy. The men do no menial work. They leave that to women and [276] servants, and enjoy a dignified repose chewing betel and gossiping. Some are expert tailors. Others with gun on shoulder wander through the jungle in search of game.

574 The Coorgs are noted for their hospitality and they enjoy visits from friends and relations. Should a male guest arrive, the men of the house meet him at the *kayale* and exchange greetings. The method of doing so is [576] by both sexes alike and is very charming. The salutant being always the younger, stoops down, and touches the feet of the other who rests his head on the person concerned and blesses him. Meanwhile, the cook has spread a mat or carpet on the verandah bench, where he rests after washing his feet. He is then served with a chew, and later on with a meal, after which is discussed the special business of his visit. On his return, he pays his parting salutation in the above manner to the old men and women of the house, and the young men accompany him for some distance and take leave of him in the same manner.

When a female guest arrives, the cook or any other woman of the household meets her with a vessel of water and after saluting takes the kerchief from the guest's head and conducts her into the inner hall where she is received by the women, who enter into a free and hearty flow of conversation without any formalities. On leaving the house, the guest's kerchief is returned to her and an old man of the house with one or two women accompany her some distance. These visits of women are never made without the knowledge of their husbands, and they are always accompanied by some old man or female servant.

Dress

291 The principal dress of a Coorg consists of a long coat of dark coloured cloth open in front and reaching below the knees. The sleeves end below the elbow and show the arms of a white shirt which is generally of the English pattern. This is folded across and confined at the waist by a red or blue girdle wound several times round and round, and knotted at the left front. [41] On the right front, the Coorg short knife is stuck to the girdle having an ivory or silver handle, and fastened with silver chains. The large broad-bladed waist knife (*odikathi*) is very rarely worn. Its place is at the back, where it is carried in a brass clasp with its point directed towards the left shoulder. Like the kukri of the Gurkhas, it was a formidable weapon in hand-to-hand fighting. It is now used as a test of skill and strength on festive occasions, as when a bridegroom is expected to cut through the trunk of a plantain tree at one stroke. Their head-dress is a red kerchief or the beauti-

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

244 *English Vegetables* are satisfactorily grown by Mercara
137 residents and still more so by some planters on their estates. Potatoes and Cabbage thrive remarkably well; also Peas, Beans, Knoll kohl, Salad, Beets, Turnips and Carrots of excellent quality are produced. The natives do now only attempt to cultivate these vegetables, but the markets are unsupplied with them.

244 *Native Vegetables*, which are reared on patches of paddy-fields after harvest time, or in small gardens, in the villages about Fraserpet, include: French Beans, Radishes, Pumpkins, Cucumbers, Indian Corn, Brinjals, Chillies, Coriander, Amaranthus and others, but even these are not plentiful in the Mercara market, and what there is comes chiefly from Fraserpet.

243 *Dry grain*, such as Ragy, Avary, Tavary, Huruli and others are chiefly grown in the open country of the Nanjarájpatna taluq lying along the western banks of the Kávéri. It is there also, that Tobacco is cultivated for sale, whilst in most of the Coorg farms little reserved patches of the narcotic is grown for home-consumption; but the Coorg tobacco is of an indifferent description, no particular care being bestowed upon its cultivation. The introduction of a new seed would
[248] have a beneficial influence. A few Hemp plants are here and
[276] there grown near native houses, but more for the use of smoking the intoxicating leaves, than for the sake of the fibre.

241 Similar to other hilly parts of India, there prevails a
243 primitive mode of cultivation called "kumari," which is practised by the lowest classes of natives, the Kurumbas and Kudias, chiefly on the western slopes of the Ghats. They cut and burn a patch of jungle, and plant either the small reddish hill-rice, sown broadcast upon the slightly dug up land, or Ragy. The former yields a 10 fold, the latter a 200 to 300 fold return. Such fields are only once or twice cultivated, when they are abandoned in favour of a new piece

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

arms and the sharp edge of their knives by beheading pigs or cutting at a blow through the trunk of thick plantain trees. The long matchlock gun is now more a weapon of curiosity than of practical use, except with the poorer Coorgs, the wealthier sportsmen having supplied themselves with English rifles of the best description. Their ancient arms and ornaments were manufactured with the most simple tools by natives of Coorg.

The Coorg Rajahs used to reward men distinguished for personal bravery with silver and gold bangles, or with an ornamented large knife bearing the Rajah's stamp ☋ upon the blade and these tokens are kept as sacred heirlooms and worn on grand occasions only.

The personal appearance of the Coorg women is not less striking than that of the men. They are remarkably fair, of goodly stature, well shaped and many are really handsome before the betel-chewing, which generally begins after marriage, disfigures their regular features, and blackens their otherwise brilliant teeth. Their festive costume—and the ordinary dress differs only in quality—is one of the most becoming that can be seen in India. A white or light blue cotton jacket with long sleeves fits tight and is closed up to the neck. A long piece of white muslin or blue cotton stuff forms the skirt, being several times wrapped round the waist and tied by means of a string, so as to make the skirt fall in graceful folds almost down to the ancles whilst one end of it covers the bosom and is knotted together on the right shoulder. To give fulness to the skirt the other end is arranged in folds, which, contrary to the fashion of other Hindu women are gathered behind, a sensible arrangement and most convenient for unobstructed activity in house and field. This peculiarity did not escape the notice of the prying Brahmins who of course accounted for it by a silly Puránic legend, which at